

FALL 2021



NEWSLETTER

PUNCH OUT STRESS WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the many demands on life. We all react differently to stress. A small amount of stress can be good because it may motivate you to perform well. However, many challenges daily, such as sitting in traffic, a global pandemic, meeting deadlines, and paying bills, can push you in a corner or make you feel you have been knocked out.

Our brain is hard-wired with an alarm system for your protection. When your brain perceives a threat, it signals to your body to release a burst of hormones that increase your heart rate and raise your blood pressure. This "fight-or-flight" response fuels you to deal with the threat. Once the threat is gone, your body returns to a normal, more relaxed state. Unfortunately, the nonstop complications of daily life may cause some alarm systems to shut off.

A 2017 American Psychological Association (AMA) survey found 71% of respondents reported experiencing at least one symptom of stress over the past month. Now, stressors from the COVID-19 pandemic may have made matters worse.

Managing stress can help your mind and body adapt or become more resilient to the blows we are hit with daily. Without it, your body may always stay on high alert. Over time, chronic stress or long-term activation of the stress response system, along with prolonged exposure to cortisol and other stress hormones, may put you at risk for health troubles such as anxiety, digestive problems, headaches, depression, high blood pressure, or stroke.

Fortunately, research reveals a technique that works to fight stress. That technique is creating a positive, optimistic outlook on life. A positive attitude improves your health, relationships, and self-confidence, all of which lower your stress levels and increase happiness. On the other hand, a negative attitude does the opposite. According to researchers from John Hopkins, people with a family history of heart disease and had a positive attitude were one-third

less likely to have a heart attack or other cardiovascular event within five to 25 years than those with a more negative attitude.

Positive thinking means you approach unpleasantness in a more constructive and productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst. It often starts with self-talk. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head. These automatic thoughts can be positive or negative. Some self-talk comes from logic and reason and others may arise from misconceptions you create because of lack of information.

According to the Mayo Clinic, it is possible to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. It is a simple process, but it does take time and practice because you are developing a new habit. Some health benefits that come from positive thinking are lower rates of depression, less amounts of distress, better psychological and physical well-being, improved cardiovascular health, and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease. Wellness techniques according to the American Psychological Association (APA) list five science-based tips to manage stress. Check out these techniques at this website, <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/manage-stress-tips.pdf>.

Don't forget to keep a grateful, positive attitude to combat daily stress. Visit this site to learn how to develop positive thinking to help punch out stress daily. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/>



DIABETES: DON'T SUGAR COAT IT

November is National Diabetes Month! But what is diabetes? Our bodies are made up of millions of cells. These cells need energy from the food we eat to keep our bodies working properly. Our bodies turn some of the carbohydrates we eat like bread, pasta, fruits, and some vegetables into glucose (a form of sugar). The body can also make its own glucose when we don't eat enough. This sugar travels in your blood to different parts of your body. It is the sugar that gives our cells energy! Our bodies also produce a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps the sugar in our blood enter our cells.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 1 in 3 U.S. adults have prediabetes—that's 88 million people—but most people don't know they have it. Prediabetes is a serious health condition where your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Diabetes is easier to understand if you think of the cells in your body as a house and insulin as the key. The sugar in our blood needs to go into our cells (the house) so that we can use it for energy. Insulin (the key) is what opens the door for sugar! Without insulin the sugar is stuck in our blood, giving us high blood sugar. This leads to diabetes.

Alabama has one of the highest rates of diabetes in the nation. According to the United Health Foundation, more than 14% of Alabama's population have been diagnosed with diabetes. These rates are increasing at an alarming speed amongst children. This is because of unhealthy food and beverage choices and inactive lifestyles. However, this disease is preventable and manageable.

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestion and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), nutrition and exercise are critical in both prevention and management of diabetes.

Here are some tips to get you started:

Get Support! Managing or preventing diabetes alone can be difficult. Finding someone to hold you accountable can help you stay motivated

MAKE HEALTHIER HOLIDAY CHOICES

The Holiday season is often filled with many tempting traditions that include some of our favorite foods. As you celebrate, think of little changes you can make to create healthier meals and active days.

Create some delicious makeovers to your favorite recipes by trying the following:

- To help reduce cholesterol in recipes try replacing 1 egg with 2 egg whites.
- Use low sodium vegetable broth in your mashed potatoes instead of butter or margarine.
- Try applesauce as a low-fat option to substitute for oil, butter or margarine in muffins. Use a small amount of applesauce at first, too much may change the texture of the finished product.
- For dips and sauces, substitute fat-free yogurt instead of sour cream or mayonnaise.
- Sliced or silvered almonds are a yummy crunchy topping option to replace fried onion rings.
- For casseroles and salads, choose reduced-fat or fat-free cheese.

When planning to go to a Holiday party consider before and during the party occasion the following tips:

along your health journey! Consider finding a walking/running partner. Join a gym or fitness club or an online diabetes support group.

Move More! Track your activity with a smartphone, watch, or pen and paper. The CDC recommends 30 minutes of exercise a day or 150 minutes (about 2 and a half hours) a week for most adults and an hour a day for most kids.

Eat Smart! Know your daily carbohydrate limits. Carbohydrates include things like pasta, bread, potatoes, fruits, and sugary drinks. For most adults, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 130 grams of carbohydrates a day. If you have already been diagnosed with diabetes it is best to speak with your doctor and a registered dietitian (R.D.) about your limits. Look for diabetes-friendly cookbooks and recipes. Drink less sugary drinks like soda and juice and eat less sugary foods like cakes and candy.

Take it Slow! Making too many big health behavior changes at once can be overwhelming and can cause you to give up. Instead, make one small change every week. Park further away from your destination to get in extra steps or movement. Drink one extra glass of water in the morning. Eat fruit for dessert instead of sweets.

Do your Research! Make sure your information is coming from a reliable source like a doctor or a registered dietitian. When searching the internet, make sure the website ends in .gov, .org, or .edu, or the website is from a credible source, such as the CDC to know that it is trustworthy.

Here is a helpful website from the CDC to learn more about Prediabetes and Diabetes to share with family and friends, <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/national-diabetes-month>. A Prediabetes Risk survey is available to complete. See your doctor if your score is indicative of possible risk of prediabetes. You can fill out survey online, <https://www.cdc.gov/prediabetes/takethetest/> or print and share, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/Prediabetes-Risk-Test-Final.pdf>

- Start your day with a small meal that includes fruit, vegetables, whole grains and some type of lean protein.
- Never go to the party hungry! Eating a small meal or snack before the party should help prevent overeating.
- Try socializing instead of seeking out the party foods.
- Don't stand near the food table while socializing to cut down on unconscious nibbling.
- Make sure when and if you eat to get a plate instead of mindlessly grazing.
- Enjoy the food that you like most and pass on the ones you don't.

Include exercise in your Holiday tradition. You can enjoy a nice walk with family and friends after eating a meal. It is also fun to play a fun game of tag football, kickball, tennis, etc.. Do what is fun for you and your friends and family. Cheers to good health!!

Check out this CDC website for more tips for healthier holiday eating, for everyone especially those who have diabetes, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/holidays-healthy-eating.html>

For budget friendly holiday recipes visit: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/healthy-thrifty-holiday-menus>



KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

It is finally fall, and the holidays are quickly approaching! Whether its Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, the kids are home from school, and it is a perfect time to get them in the kitchen. Cooking with your kids gives them a new and fun responsibility, helps them make healthier food choices, and makes them more likely to try new foods.

Here are a couple of tips and ideas to help you introduce your kids to cooking:

- **Practice food safety.** Make sure handwashing is the first safety rule. Wash hands for 20 seconds before and after cooking, especially when dealing with raw meat.
- **Know your cooking temperatures!** Certain foods like beef, chicken, and eggs can cause food born illnesses, like salmonella, if they are undercooked. Poultry and casseroles should be heated to 165°; fresh beef, lamb, veal, or ham to 145°; and egg-based dishes to 160°.
- **Store foods correctly.** Be sure to store leftovers properly. If stored incorrectly, bacteria can grow and cause food poisoning. Perishable food should be refrigerated no more than 2 hours after being served. Food left out longer than 2 hours should be discarded. Be cautious of foods reaching danger zone (between 40° to 140°). At this temperature, bacteria can grow rapidly leading to food born illnesses.
- **Make sure tasks are right for the kids ages.** Letting kids help in the kitchen help them become more independent and responsible. Starting with supervised basic skills will help keep the kids safe,

FAMILY-TIME TABLE ETIQUETTE

Do you find your kids eating on the couch while watching tv rather than joining the family at the table? Eating meals at the table with family or friends can be a rarity. However, it is a great chance to consume healthy foods and teach children about basic table manners. Before getting into the how and the why table etiquette is important, let's go over some basics.

A few rules to keep in mind when it's mealtime, before sitting down at the table:

- **Rule 1. Make sure there is no TV, phone on or background noise.** This can be distracting and make it hard to have a conversation. Leave your phone elsewhere, if you have to keep it with you, keep it invisible to others and turn it to silent or off.
- **Rule 2. Chew with your mouth closed.** Nobody wants to see or hear your food. Also please do not talk while chewing, if someone asks you a question simply give them a signal that you are chewing and answer the question when you are done chewing completely.
- **Rule 3. Excuse yourself from the table properly.** Before getting up from the table, be sure to ask if you may be excused. This includes when you're getting seconds, going to the restroom, or putting your dishes away.
- **Rule 4. Easy utensil etiquette.** Proper use of utensils can be extensive, but we're going to keep it simple. First thing to know

focused, and excited! Generally, kids ages 3 to 5 can help wash produce, mash potatoes, and mix ingredients. Ages 6 to 7 can peel soft foods like egg and bananas, crack eggs, and measure ingredients. Most kids ages 8 to 9 can help check the temperature of warm food with thermometers, beat eggs, and cut soft foods like boiled eggs and mushrooms. While most kids ages 10 and up can cut more challenging foods like celery and apples, use the stovetop, or handle operating the oven while supervised to do things like flip pancakes, cook mac and cheese or boil eggs.

- **Search for kid friendly recipes.** Kid-friendly recipes should contain simple ingredients like apples, pasta, and cheese, or any ingredients that your kids already like! The kids will be more willing to try new foods if it is paired with something they know and enjoy. The recipe should be age-appropriate with short prep times to keep the kid's attention and require little equipment to avoid large and messy cleanups.

Kids in the kitchen cooking is a great way to set a great foundation for choosing healthy eating and knowing the skills to make nutritious food. Check out this handy and informative link for healthy kid approved recipes, <https://cookingwithkids.org/recipes/>



when setting the table is forks go on the left side of the plate and knives and spoons go on the right side of the plate. Second thing to remember is this phrase, outside-in. This means when you are at a table with more than one utensil, use the outside one first and work your way inward. For example, if you have two forks on the right side of the plate, the fork farthest from the plate would be used for the salad and the fork closest to the plate would be used for the main dish.

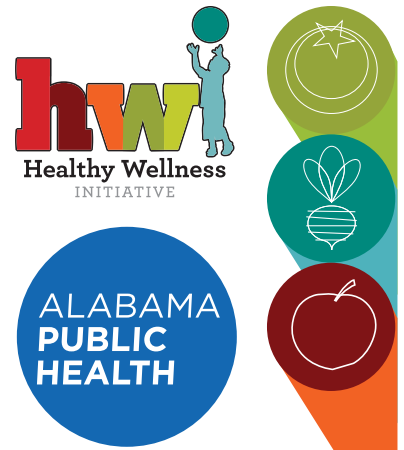


Following these four basic table etiquette rules can lead to meaningful family time and great opportunities for bonding. Eating together as family allows your child to practice social skills and teaches them how to prepare food. It can also help children become familiar with correct portion sizes and mindful eating, which can improve health by limiting fast food and processed food consumption.

For more information on table manners to share please visit https://www.etiquettescholar.com/dining_etiquette/table_manners.html

"Gratitude and attitude are not challenges; they are choices." - Robert Braathe

Healthy Wellness Initiative
Alabama Department of Public Health
The RSA Tower
201 Monroe Street, Suite 1010
Montgomery, AL 36130



NEWS AND EVENTS

AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH – NOVEMBER 2021

The American Diabetes Association promotes American Diabetes Month in November to raise awareness about diabetes and share helpful resources. For more information check out website <https://www.diabetes.org/community/american-diabetes-month>

HEALTH & PHYSICAL LITERACY SUMMIT – FEBRUARY 13 – 15, 2022

Location: Hyatt Regency/The Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, AL. The Health and Physical Literacy Summit is a professional development opportunity focusing on the application of the dimensions of Health and Physical Literacy. For more information check out website <https://www.asahperd.org/health-and-physical-literacy-summit-2022>

AMERICAN HEART MONTH -FEBRUARY 2022

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) sponsors American Heart Month in February to raise awareness about heart health. Join the conversation by using the NHLBI promotional toolkit. For more information check out website <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-month>

HWI CREW MEMBER RETIREMENT

I have had the privilege of working for the Alabama Department of Public Health for over 32 years! I look forward to 2022 to begin a new chapter in my life. Thank you for your support of our HWI newsletter. As the HWI editor and fellow writer, I have enjoyed sharing information I hope that has been inspiring and helpful to you, coworkers, parents, friends, and family.

I wish the best of health to all of you.

Happy holidays!

Take care and be well! **Davia D. Adams**

